

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, August 26, 1906, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Washington, D. C. Wednesday, (Aug. 26, 1906.) My dear Alec:

How do you like the idea of this little baby life beginning there among all your books in the room where so many brain babies of yours have been born? Do you suppose there are any germs floating around there which emanating from your brain will take root in the sensitive baby brain and come forth in later years?

Anyway it seems to have had a good start in life, being so strong and good-natured. It doesn't mind noise, sleeps all the time and never cries except when it has a stomach ache. As it is wakened regularly for its food and made to nurse fairly, steadily for exactly twenty minutes, it never has to cry from hunger. Oh but it's to be a scientifically brought up baby if its parents' present determination holds. Yesterday its grandmother came in and found that it had been yelling for some time. The nurse was out, the papa was trying to quiet it by dropping warm water into its mouth with a dropper. That would quiet it for a time, then it would begin yelling again. Daisy said it was no use taking it out of the crib, if it were crying for fun it shouldn't be encouraged, if from pain what good would taking it up do. Finally I persuaded her that holding it up might let out some wind, so then she gave way and Alec stopped crying on Grandmother's shoulder. By and by the father wanted to try too and the nurse came home to find the scientific baby very much like others. However, there really was reason for the yelling and nothing more was heard 2 from the little fellow afterward. I never saw such an athletic infant, he thoroughly believes in his grandfather's theory of stretching and stretches till his black head touches his back and he rolls all over his crib. It's a funny thing to hold him for he braces himself so tightly on such occasions, it's a hard round body with stiff projections you have in your arms. I am so glad Daisy and David have

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a healthy baby, I was afraid of a delicate, nervous one. Daisy herself is a joy, so well and bright and strong.

Sunday. There's been so much to do that this begun several days ago hasn't gone. I'm sorry. Everything was in such confusion Daisy welcomed me with the cry "please make us look nice." The whole "party" was so unexpected. Mamma had a breakfast party Friday morning, and they were going out to the garage that afternoon, when instead they came past-haste to 1331 Conn. Ave., the furniture in your den was simply pushed aside, a bed carried in and operations carried on amid the confusion. All this is rectified now. Beside this however, there was the servant question, when I found the door bell invariably answered twice, instantly by one maid and 15 minutes later by another, when I found Irvata and Maggie both making a chicken bash for Daisy and making it different ways, it seemed time to interfere, and that meant going to work early and staying late. Meantime the scientific father got stirred upon the subject of his baby's crying. Dr. Gaunt's baby never had colic his shouldn't either. He had a grand consultation with Dr. Miller and was highly indignant because the doctor only volunteered some indefinite remarks that all babies did cry it was perfectly well, he didn't know why it cried it might be that the Mother's milk disagreed, or that its internal workings were not quite 3 straight yet. Driven to the wall he broke down and frankly said he didn't know such about babies anyway, he was a specialist in illness of women, babies were not in his line! — Fancy! David went wild, telephoned all over town for some doctor who did know something about babies, but all were out of town. Finally they got hold of Dr. Mohun (?) who was ether doctor when the baby was born, and there was a solemn confabulation at 12 P. M. over the eight pound mite of humanity. Daisy telling me about it afterward said "the baby behaved beautifully, that is it yelled most satisfactorily." The three men including the father examined it all over listened to its heart, looked at the cord, felt it all over and finally pronounced it as perfect a specimen as is generally turned out and finally gave up the problem as beyond them; suggested Daisy's milk might have too much proteid in it, but why they should say that without examination or analysis Daisy and David couldn't see. So they ordered a dose

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of castor oil and departed leaving a very rampageous father to wait till morning when he went off to Baltimore to see what he could do there with doctors and nurses. I understand he interviewed 25, but got very little comfort. Meantime the boy got better. Then he saw the baby undressed and found the poor little fellows neck all red and raw, and said Daisy "he just swore like a trooper and vowed no child of his should wear any more of those — clothes, he couldn't stand them himself. So he got needle and thread, scissors and fine linen and allowed them to suit his own ideas of comfort, and this morning he is triumphant, and perspiring, both wife and baby slept like tops all night, and he thinks it's all due to his efforts. He certainly has and is doing lots for them. He went down in the 4 automobile and came back with carpenter and lumber and big pneumatic tired castors and with cardboard and scissors fitted them on to the bed and showed the man how to do the work. The man made a model in iron and now the bed has gone down to be put on these big rubber wheels so that Daisy can be easily wheeled in and out of the verandah on her bed. Then he went to the apothecary's and not finding the right kind of glass medicine dropper borrowed the apothecary's blowpipe and made some to suit himself. Then he invested in great, square, big-mouthed glass jars and set the nurse to work cutting out pieces of the sterilized gauze used about Daisy and the baby, and putting them in neatly folded packages in these jars which now stand on the table all ready for instant use. He never heard of a clothes-horse so he made Irvata make a drying frame with his lumber. Altogether you may imagine we have had lively times, what it would have been, had anything been seriously wrong dear only knows. I think the wonder is that Daisy has only lain quietly and on the whole been thoroughly pleased with her husband and entertained by his rampages. But he certainly has improved matters and is surely an illustration of the way in which all improvements are made.

Raymond awaits my letter so Goodbye I love you.

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Mabel. Sunday, August 26. How are you, please write me. Daisy is very anxious I should impress on you what a nice little namesake you have.